

Notice to Self-represented Parties:
Welcome to the New Haven Superior Court Clerk's Office!

You have filed an Appearance telling the court that you are a self-represented party. This means that you have decided to represent yourself in this case instead of having a lawyer represent you. This notice is to tell you about your rights and responsibilities as a self-represented party.

The Superior Court Clerk's Office. Our office processes all paperwork that comes into this courthouse about your case. Our staff is responsible for maintaining the court file and making sure that the file correctly reflects the status of your case.

Our office also makes sure that appropriate papers that you file get to the Judge, Family Support Magistrate or other judicial official who will make the decisions in your case. We will also try to help you understand court procedures, but it is important to remember that **the Clerk's Office staff is not permitted to give legal advice to you or anyone else.**

You should know that the court system can be very confusing and that it is a good idea to get a lawyer if you can. If you cannot afford a lawyer, you may contact **New Haven Legal Assistance Association** at 203-946-4811 to see if you qualify for free legal services. If you need help in finding a paid attorney, you may contact the **New Haven County Bar Lawyer Referral Service** at 203-562-5750. The Lawyer Referral Service can give you the names of attorneys in your area who may be willing to handle your case and sometimes talk with you for no fee or a reduced fee.

What You Should Expect If You Represent Yourself. While you have the right to represent yourself in court, you should not expect any special treatment, help, or attention from the court. You must still follow the rules of the court. This is a list of some things the court staff can do for you:

- We can explain and answer questions about how the court works.
- We can provide you with the number of the local lawyer referral service, legal services program, and other services where you can get legal information.
- We can give you general information about court rules, procedures, and practices.
- We can provide court schedules and information on how to get a case scheduled.
- We can provide you information from your case file.
- We can provide you with court forms and instructions that are available and give you guidance on how to fill out these forms.
- We can usually answer questions about court deadlines.

We are unable to:

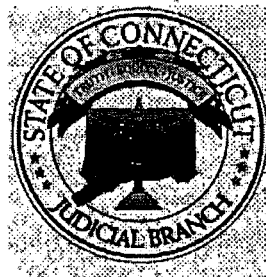
- Tell you whether or not you should bring your case to court.
- Recommend a lawyer for you.
- Tell you what to say in court or tell you what words to use in your court papers.
- Tell you what will happen if you bring your case to court.
- Talk to the judge for you.
- Let you talk to the judge outside of court.
- Change an order signed by a judge.

Other Sources of Information: There is a Law Library on the 7th Floor of this Courthouse. It is open to the public from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM every day that the courthouse is open. A Law Librarian may be able to help you to find books and other resources relevant to your case. Remember, however, that like our Clerks, the Law Librarians are not permitted to give you any legal advice; they may only help you find law books or other materials that might help you with your case.

There is also a **Court Service Center** on the 1st Floor of this Courthouse: The center is well stocked with pamphlets and other written material that may help to explain some of the common procedures in our courthouse. The Center also has a computer with Internet access and a copying machine that you may use for limited periods of time to help you with your case. The Center's staff members are also very knowledgeable about court procedures and can provide assistance and answer questions about filling out court forms. Remember, like the Clerk's Office and the Law Librarians, Court Service Center staff are not permitted to give you any legal advice about your case.

We know that representing yourself in court can be difficult. We in the Clerk's Office are committed to doing whatever we are allowed to do in order to make your experience as productive as possible.

**Superior Court Chief Clerk's Office
New Haven Judicial District**



The mission of the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch is to serve the interests of justice and the public by resolving matters brought before it in a fair, timely, efficient and open manner.